

## Lightning strikes observation post

Two infantrymen praise fire response officials after escaping from tower with minor injuries

by Senior Airman Phillip Ulmer

Tuzla Times

A severe lightning storm which sent Task Force Eagle's emergency response teams into action lit up more than just the sky Saturday evening.

Senior Airman Barry Reigstad, 4100th command post controller was manning the command post when the first report of a fire came in.

"I couldn't see the fire from where I was," said Reigstad. "But I called it into the fire department who took charge of the situation."

"We were dispatched at 6 p.m. to check out what appeared to be a grass fire on the other side of the runway," said Senior Master Sgt. Mark Giuliano, 4100th group (P) fire chief. "I went out with two other airmen and arrived on the scene about five minutes later."

The fire turned out to be a small camp fire set by the soldiers guarding the base perimeter. After extinguishing the small fire near the base of observation post two, the fire chief, noticed another fire near observation post three, about 1,000 yards away.

At the same time, one of the worst lightning storms Tuzla had seen this year was rolling over the mountains and pouring into the quiet valley.

"It was so fast," said Senior Airman

Charles Winters, 4100th fire protection specialist who was also on the scene.

"From out of nowhere, this huge storm rolled in and the next thing I knew, it was dark."

"We packed up and drove over to check out the fire," said Giuliano.

Moments later Reigstad made the call that crackled across the radio at 6:20 p.m.

"Attention on the net, attention on the net... lightning within five miles, lightning within five miles."

On his way to the observation post Giuliano could see lightning hitting the ground all around his truck.

"I was half-way out of the truck, about 15 feet from the observation post, when it struck," said Giuliano. "Then I heard two people screaming from inside the tower."

The leg of the observation post tower 3 had been struck by lightning, charging the entire tower. Inside there were two Army infantrymen providing force protection for the base.

"I was on the radio with someone from one of the observation posts," said Cpl. Joseph Jurcsak, from Charlie Company 312. "They were telling me not to use the radio, unless I absolutely needed to, because of the



lightning. I was getting ready to say 'Roger out' when... POW!"

"It blew us both backwards into the air, seven or eight feet," said Pfc. Robert Schumacher, Headquarters Allied Mobile Forces Land, attached to Charlie Company 312.

The two infantrymen excitedly explained it as an explosion, with a super bright flash, followed by a concussion wave.

"It was the loudest thing I'd ever heard, and the next thing I know, I'm laying on my back screaming," said Schumacher. "I couldn't move and it hurt like hell."

With lightning still striking throughout the area, Giuliano sprang up the ladder into the tower.

"I didn't know anyone was in the tower until I heard them screaming," said Giuliano.

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### Task Force Eagle Scoreboard



Scheduled:	3,628
Total Flown:	3,035
PAX:	24,032
Cargo (Short Tons):	23,931
Vehicles:	1,284
Patients Medevaced	609

## Mobile Land Radio turn-in tracks accountability, provides extra level of communication security

by Senior Airman Brian Longstreth

Communications Correspondent

Well folks, the time is here. We need to conduct a 100 percent inventory of all Land Mobile Radios at Tuzla Air Base. Everyone who possess or has one signed out, needs to come by the Communications Focal Point and see me.

Everyone will need to fill out new hand receipts. And, if you act now, you will also receive a free gift of Digital Encryption Standard keying for the radios. This special offer is available for an unlimited time, so hurry to avoid the rush. Everyone will need to have this done by Monday at 6 p.m. if they want to maintain radio contact with the rest of us. Call ext. 143 for more information.

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"I ran up into the tower to make sure they were OK. I looked at their radio... it was fried, so I called the tower for help using my radio."

At 6:26 p.m. Reigstad got the call at the command post via the primary crash net that observation post 3 was hit by lightning and that two individuals were down.

"I notified the Battalion Aid Station who dispatched an emergency response team, then I called the commander to let him know what was going on," said Reigstad. "Then I started coordinating and passing information to the Army's battle staff."

The Army's and Air Force's emergency response teams sprang into action.

Meanwhile, the second vehicle previously dispatched to fight the fire arrived on the scene. Winters and Airman 1st Class Zachary McCabe, also from the 4100th Fire Protection Flight knew what they had to do.

"I could see lightning hitting the ground

everywhere," said Winters. "I shoved the thought to the back of my head and ran up the ladder."

Once in the tower Winters started to access the situation.

"As the sharp, piercing pain slowly subsided, a painful prickly-tingly, pins-and-needles sensation quickly took over," said Jurcsak.

"I checked to see if they were breathing," said Winters. "Then I checked to see how well their pupils responded to light and took their pulses."

Moments later an Army ambulance arrived on the scene.

"We helped them both walk down from the tower into the waiting ambulance," said Giuliano.

At 6:45 p.m. they arrived at the Battalion Aid station where they were treated and released. Neither suffered more than minor injuries.

"We were both pretty sore they next day though," said Schumacher while rubbing

the side of his neck. "They say the current came in through the radio handset, into one side of my neck, out the other and into Jurcsak.

"Our ears were ringing a couple days afterward, and the hair was singed off of my leg, but we're OK," said Jurcsak.

"I don't know if it was fate, coincidence or divine intervention that we were right there," said Giuliano. "Since there radio was destroyed and there was no way for them to call for help, there is no telling how long they could have been there before someone found them."

"Thank God the fire department guys were there," said Jurcsak. "They were awesome. They took good care of us."

When asked if he thought he was lucky, Schumacher said yes.

"You know, you always hear people saying that you've got a better chance at getting hit by lightning than you do winning the lottery," he said. "Well, when I get home, I'm going to buy some lottery tickets."

## ***Nature's fireworks pose threat to those 'caught in weather'***

According to the National Weather Service, the typical thunderstorm is 15 miles in diameter and lasts an average of 30 minutes. Nearly 1,800 thunderstorms are occurring at any moment around the world.

Every thunderstorm produces lightning, which kills more people than tornadoes. On the average 93 deaths and 300 injuries are attributed to lightning each year in the U.S.

Lightning results from the buildup and discharge of electrical energy between positively and negatively charged areas in the atmosphere.

Your chances of being struck by lightning are estimated to be 1 in 600,000 but could be reduced by following safety rules.

Most lightning deaths and injuries occur when people are caught outdoors. If you are caught outdoors and there is no shelter nearby find a low spot away from trees, fences, and poles. Make sure the place you pick is not subject to flooding.

If you feel your skin tingle or your hair stand on end, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Make yourself the smallest target possible, and minimize your contact with the ground.

Remember, if you can hear thunder, you

are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning. Do not take shelter in small sheds, under isolated trees. Telephone lines and metal pipes can conduct electricity. Unplug unnecessary appliances. Avoid using telephones or any electrical appliances. Use phones **ONLY** in an emergency.

**MYTH:** If it is not raining, then there is no danger from lightning.

**FACT:** Lightning often strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall.

**MYTH:** The rubber soles of shoes or rubber tires on a car will protect you from being struck by lightning.

**FACT:** Rubber-soled shoes and rubber tires provide **NO** protection lightning. However, the steel frame of a hard-topped vehicle provides increased protection if you are not touching metal. Although you may be injured if lightning strikes your car, you are much safer inside a vehicle than outside.



**THE Tuzla Times**

Published for the men and women of the 4100th Group (P)

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**Senior Airman  
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*4100th Group (P) Supply*

**Hometown:** Griffith, Ind.

**Age:** 29

**Specialty:** Inventory Management Specialist

**Home Unit:** 86th Supply Squadron, Ramstein Air Base, Germany

**Time in service:** 4 years 9 months

**Time at Tuzla:** 88 days

**Deployed mission:** I'm the deputy chief of supply, where I work inventory, stock control MICAP and everything else.

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years?** I see myself as a technical sergeant, going on to be a master sergeant. Living in Germany, going to school and enjoying the thought of retirement.

**What do you like most about Tuzla?** I like how all the different groups pull together to get the job done.

**What do you like the least?** Being away from my new family; my wife Gel and my daughter Madisen.



Image by Senior Airman Phillip Ulmer

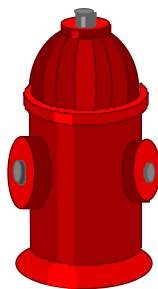
### *Cashin' in*

Senior Airman Nicolas Gonzales, 4100th Group (P) Communications Squadron, TPN-19 maintainer was awarded the commander's coin Tuesday. The coin, which is redeemable for half-a-day off, is presented each week to individuals who are singled out by their peers and supervisors for their outstanding service.

## Fire prevention begins in the tent

by Staff Sergeant Dale Martin

*Safety Correspondent*



In might not seem like it, but soon our nights here will start getting a little cooler, some even down right chilly. When these frosty nights start to become common, you'll want to fire up that old kerosene heater to warm up that cozy tent of yours.

Last year, Task Force Eagle had several tent fires due to people not keeping safety in mind. Before using that heater, keep a couple precautionary tips in mind.

Make sure

there is a fire extinguisher available and ready near each exit. Never store any type of fuel inside of tents. Fuel should be stored outside in a sandbag bunker with the siphon.

Refuel heaters outside of tents. This will prevent fuel spills in the living area or on the porches. Also wait for the heater to cool for about 30 minutes before refilling it.

Don't smoke around a heater which is being refueled. It may sound like common sense, but it happens all the time.

Keep clothing, sleeping bags and anything else at least three feet away from the heater. Never fall asleep or leave the tent while the heater is on.

Take the extra time and practice these few safety steps. They might just save your tent, and your life.



## News Briefs



The Churchill Club meets every Friday outside the Communications Focal Point tent at 8:30 p.m. The club is open to all ranks, of all services and nationalities.

Members do not have to smoke to attend, other vices are welcome (Slim Jims, near beer, water, pretzels, etc.).

Members bring their own cigars and compare the various qualities, swapping 'stogie stories.' While Cuban cigars are the most sought after, members offer tips on how to purchase quality cigars from a deployed location.

### Pass it on

Do the math. There are more than 200 Air Force people deployed to Tuzla Air Base. The Tuzla Times is limited to 70 copies each week. Once you've finished reading it, pass it along!

### Birthday Call



Happy Birthday to everyone assigned to the 4100th Group who celebrates a birthday this week!

Both, Staff Sgt. Richard Sorrell and Capt. Angelita Flores celebrate their birthdays Thursday.

### Wanted: Information

The FBI is seeking any information, including photos or videos, covering the period of January 1, 1996 June 1, 1996. These items might aid in the effort to identify suspects involved in the June Khobar Towers bombing.

Please contact special agents Jim Mowry or Ken Falk at ext 120 if you believe you have any information which can assist with the above request.

One photo could be all it takes to crack this case wide open.

### Watch the starch

Having problems with the laundry? Getting your drawers back dirtier than you sent them out? Don't just get angry! Fill out a customer comment form and contact a Brown and Root Representative.



Image by Senior Airman Phillip Ulmer

### End of tour hose down

Senior Airman Tom Haerr, 4100th Group (P) Admin Dude, rinses the shaving cream off Staff Sgt. Curtis Williams, 4100th Communications Squadron NCOIC telephone operations and maintenance, with a little help from Senior Airman Sandra Claude, who is also from the 4100th Communications Squadron. The end of tour hose down tradition began when the first group of Air Force members began to rotate back to their home duty station. Williams leaves this week for Ramstein Air Base.

## Force protection saves lives

by "The Shadow"

Force Protection Correspondent

Tuzla Air Base may seem safe on the surface, especially as more quality of life projects are completed. However, Bosnia is one of the most dangerous locations in the world to be deployed. There are five major threats we face here on a daily basis; complacency, mines, accidents, illness and medical injuries.

Complacency is the biggest threat we face today. There is nothing we do at Tuzla on a day-to-day basis that is worth your life. Stay alert to any threat, watch your partners six, and stay sharp. Do not take unnecessary risks.

The second highest risk we face here is that of mines. Tuzla Air Base has not been cleared of mines. Mines have been found near the Post Exchange, the headquarters building, and on the dirt roads which were traveled throughout the winter.

The best estimate to date is that there are approximately 10 million undiscovered mines in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The majority of them are around military installations, main and secondary routes and former areas

of conflict.

Accidents at work and play can not only put you in the hospital, but it can also impact the mission. The Air Force has set the standard at Tuzla Air Base with accident prevention. We have not had to medevac U.S. Air Force members out of the theater due to a work-related accident. We also have had no accidental discharge of weapons to date. The Army has not been as fortunate.

Remember to slow down and think when performing mundane, repetitive procedures. Be cautious around vehicles, equipment and weapons. If you see unsafe acts, stop and report the incident, and look out for each other.

Protecting ourselves from illness and medical injuries should be fairly straightforward. There are some real ugly bugs in Bosnia that can take us down. Drink only bottled water, eat healthy food and maintain good field hygiene. If you're off the base, don't eat any food which isn't steaming hot. Avoid salads because they are washed with the local water.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call us at the office at ext. 120 or call for us on the radio, channel 1. Stay safe!